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ABSTRACT

This synthesis includes various conceptions and definitions of multicultural education and outlines the implications of these definitions for practice. Definitions of multicultural education vary widely, with some relying on the cultural characteristics of diverse groups, and some emphasizing social, political, and economic factors. Most have in common the following: agreement that the content of multicultural programs should include: ethnic identities; cultural pluralism; unequal distribution of resources and opportunities; and recognition of other sociopolitical problems stemming from oppression. Multiculturalists value diversity and agree that content, structures, and practices of multicultural education will vary depending on circumstances. Goal clusters of multicultural education are: (1) ethnic and cultural literacy, (2) personal development, (3) attitude and values clarification, (4) multicultural social competence, (5) basic skills proficiency, (6) educational equity and excellence, and (7) empowerment for social reform. Although the theoretical conceptualization of multicultural education is progressing, school practice and establishing the effects of multicultural education are areas where much research remains to be done. (Contains 55 references.) (SLD)

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Urban Monograph Series

ED 378 287

A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education

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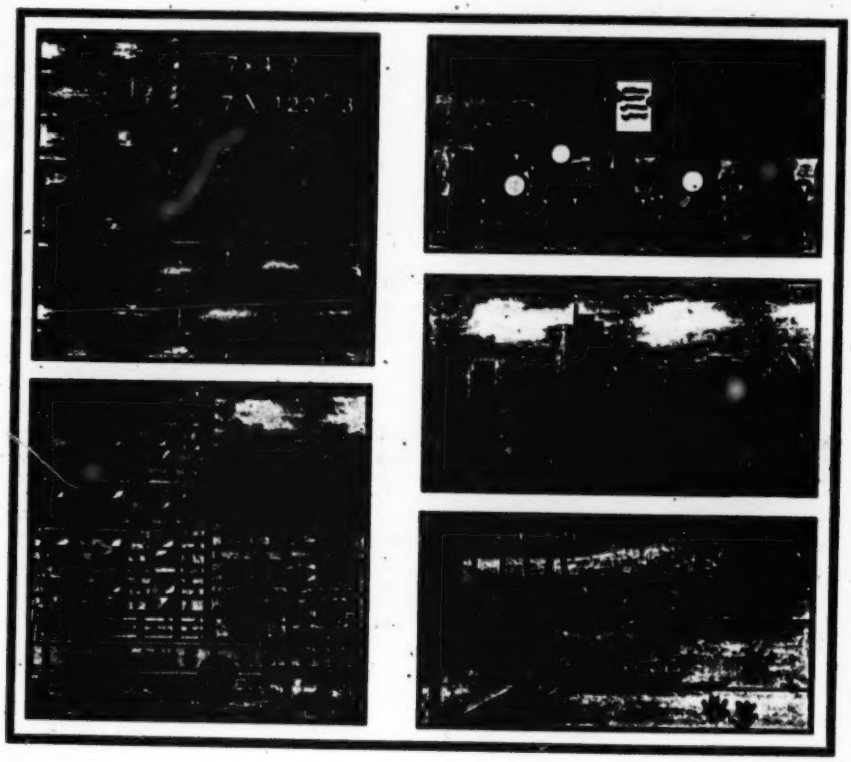

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A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education

by Geneva Gay
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Introduction

Multicultural education means different things to different people. However, the differences are not as great, confusing, or contradictory as some critics and analysts claim. Many of these differences are more semantic than substantive, a reflection of the developmental level in the field and the disciplinary orientation of advocates. One should expect people who have been involved in a discipline or educational movement for a long time to understand and talk about it differently from those who are new to it. Similarly, educators who look at schooling from the vantage point of sociology, psychology, or economics will have differing views of the key concerns of schooling. Yet, these disparate analysts may agree on which issues are the most critical ones. Such differences over means coupled with widespread agreement on substance are naturally found in discussions of multicultural education. But this diversity should not be a problem, especially when we consider that multicultural education is all about plurality.

The field includes educational scholars, researchers, and practitioners from a wide variety of personal, professional, philosophical, political, and pedagogical backgrounds. Therefore, we should expect that they will use different points of reference in discussing ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism. Yet, when allowances are made for these differences, a consensus on the substantive components of multicultural education quickly emerges. Such agreement is evident in areas such as the key content dimensions, value priorities, the justification for multicultural education, and its expected outcomes. Only when these fundamentals are articulated do variations emerge.

Some advocates talk about expected outcomes, while others consider the major determining factor to be the group being studied; the arena of school action is the primary focus for one set of advocates, and still others are most concerned with distinctions between theory and practice. Some people are selective about where to begin and what to emphasize in cultural pluralism. Others are more inclusive and want its impact to be felt in all dimensions and on every level. Regardless of these variations, all conceptions of multicultural education share four characteristics: (1) they are based upon a common set of assumptions, (2) they evolve out of common concerns, (3) they contain common

guidelines for action, (4) they share a desire to make cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity integral parts of the educational process.

When planning for multicultural education in school programs, it is important to allow different conceptions of multicultural education to be expressed in the school decision-making process rather than to insist on one definition. Conceptions of multicultural education contain value beliefs and reflect the varying levels of understanding among people involved in the school decision-making process. Conceptions of multicultural education and the value beliefs within them delineate the scope, focus, and boundaries of the field of multicultural education. These conceptions are guidelines for action and need to be clearly understood early in the process of making educational decisions. Accordingly, this synthesis includes various conceptions and definitions of multicultural education and outlines the implications of these definitions for practice.

Definitions of Multicultural Education

Definitions of multicultural education vary. Some definitions rely on the cultural characteristics of diverse groups, while others emphasize social problems (particularly those associated with oppression), political power, and the reallocation of economic resources. Some restrict their focus to people of color, while others include all major groups that are different in any way from mainstream Americans. Other definitions limit multicultural education to characteristics of local schools, and still others provide directions for school reform in all settings regardless of their characteristics. The goals of these diverse types of multicultural education range from bringing more information about various groups to textbooks, to combatting racism, to restructuring the entire school enterprise and reforming society to make schools more culturally fair, accepting, and balanced. For this reason, the field of multicultural education is referred to interchangeably as multicultural education, education that is multicultural, and anti-racist education.

The following are the most frequently used definitions of multicultural education:

- An idea, an educational reform movement, and a process intended to change the structure of educational institutions so that all students have an equal chance to achieve academic success
- A philosophy that stresses the importance, legitimacy, and vitality of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping the lives of individuals, groups, and nations
- A reform movement that changes all components of the educational enterprise, including its underlying values, procedural rules, curricula, instructional materials, organizational structure, and governance policies to reflect cultural pluralism

- An ongoing process that requires long-term investments of time and effort as well as carefully planned and monitored actions (Banks & Banks, 1993).

- Institutionalizing a philosophy of cultural pluralism within the educational system that is grounded in principles of equality, mutual respect, acceptance and understanding, and moral commitment to social justice (Baptiste, 1979)

- Structuring educational priorities, commitments, and processes to reflect the cultural pluralism of the United States and to ensure the survival of group heritages that make up society, following American democratic ideals (AACTE, 1973; Hunter, 1974)

- An education free of inherited biases, with freedom to explore other perspectives and cultures, inspired by the goal of making children sensitive to the plurality of the ways of life, different modes of analyzing experiences and ideas, and ways of looking at history found throughout the world (Parekh, 1986, pp. 26-27)

- A humanistic concept based on the strength of diversity, human rights, social justice, and alternative lifestyles for all people, it is necessary for a quality education and includes all efforts to make the full range of cultures available to students; it views a culturally pluralistic society as a positive force and welcomes differences as vehicles for better understanding the global society (ASCD Multicultural Education Commission, in Grant, 1977b, p. 3)

- An approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing curricula that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combatting oppressive practices (Bennett, 1990)

- A type of education that is concerned with various groups in American society that are victims of discrimination and assaults because of their unique cultural characteristics (ethnic, racial, linguistic, gender, etc.); it includes studying such key concepts as prejudice, identity, conflicts, and alienation, and modifying school practices and policies to reflect an appreciation for ethnic diversity in the United States (Banks, 1977)

- Acquiring knowledge about various groups and organizations that oppose oppression and exploitation by studying the artifacts and ideas that emanate from their efforts (Sizemore, 1981)

- Policies and practices that show respect for cultural diversity through educational philosophy, staffing composition and hierarchy, instructional materials, curricula, and evaluation procedures (Frazier, 1977; Grant, 1977)

- Comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students that challenges all forms of discrimination, permeates instruction and interpersonal relations in the classroom, and advances the democratic principles of social justice (Nieto, 1992)

These various definitions contain several points in common. Advocates agree that the content of multicultural education programs should include ethnic identities, cultural pluralism, unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, and other sociopolitical problems stemming from long histories of oppression. They believe that, at best, multicultural education is a philosophy, a methodology for educational reform, and a set of specific content areas within instructional programs. Multicultural education means learning about, preparing for, and celebrating cultural diversity—or learning to be bicultural. And it requires changes in school programs, policies, and practices.

Multiculturalists explicitly value diversity and agree that the specific content, structures, and practices employed in achieving multicultural education will differ depending on the setting. Therefore, it is useful for educators to develop their own definitions of multicultural education, within the general boundaries outlined above, to fit their specific needs, rather than imposing a universal structure to implement multicultural education.

Multiculturalists also agree that multicultural education has implications for decision-making that will affect operations at all levels of education, including instruction, administration, governance, counseling, program planning, performance appraisal, and school climate. Thus, everyone involved must play an active role in implementing multicultural education. Promoting diversity means acknowledging diversity, incorporating diversity into all levels, and demonstrating pride in cultural pluralism along with a sincere belief that diversity is desirable.

The actions taken in schools to adopt multicultural education should reflect the race, language, ethnicity, habits, and customs of ethnic groups throughout the global community. In order to promote a comprehensive understanding of cultural groups, we must use a variety of methods and a composite of various areas of scholarship, including the humanities, arts, social sciences, history, politics, and sciences.

To implement multicultural education fully, fundamental changes will need to be made in the conception, organization, and execution of the educational process. These changes require modifications in an educational system that has been governed with a monocultural orientation based on Eurocentric, middle- class cultural norms. Thus, implied in the definitions given above is another concept that finds general agreement among multiculturalists: multiculturalism requires

simultaneous changes on multiple levels of schooling. These changes must be deliberate, long-range, ongoing, and—most important—comprehensive.

The Need for Multicultural Education

Multicultural education should become a regular part of education in the United States for three major reasons: the social realities of U.S. society, the influence of culture and ethnicity on human growth and development, and the conditions of effective teaching and learning. These reasons explain not only the need for multicultural education, but also what its content emphasis should be and how it should be taught. Each reason plays an important and unique role in establishing the justifications, parameters, and directions for multicultural education.

Social Realities

The United States is extremely culturally pluralistic, socially stratified, and racially divided. Popular news magazines, such as *Time* and *U.S. News and World Report*, often reiterate this fact. The April 9, 1990, issue of *Time* examined the growing percentage of people of color in the U.S. population. A November 1993 special edition of the same magazine explored the effects of immigration on the "changing face of America." Diversity of race, culture, ethnicity, social class, religion, language, and national origin is a fundamental feature of interpersonal interactions and community structures.

However, in the more formal aspects of society, such as institutional policies, practices, and power allocation, Anglocentric and middle-class cultural values predominate. The organization and government of schools provides one illustration of this condition. Most school structures and procedures are grounded in mainstream cultural conceptions of law, order, reason, and rationality. Another illustration of the predominance of Anglocentric, middle-class culture is that the significant power positions in politics and economics tend to be held by people from this cultural background. A third illustration of this predominance is the extent to which intimate relationships are established along ethnic, racial, and social lines in the United States. In forming marriage partnerships and religious affiliations (two of the most intimate contexts of interpersonal relations), United States citizens are predominantly ethnic in their choices.

Despite the pluralism of United States society, most people live in relatively isolated enclaves, away from others who are racially, socially, and culturally different. Individuals from the same ethnic groups live in close proximity to one another, creating largely single race or ethnic group geographic clusters, such as Anglo suburbs, Hispanic barrios, Chinatowns, Little Italys, and Little Japans. The population tends to be separated along economic lines, so that

members of the middle, upper, and lower social classes within and across ethnic groups do not interact with one another on substantive or egalitarian levels. The divisions between these groups are increasing instead of diminishing.

Separation along racial and economic lines is pronounced in the United States even in regions that appear to have racially mixed residential areas. This mixture only appears on the surface; in reality, these apparently desegregated communities contain insulated ethnic and racial pockets. Similarly, even in many legally desegregated schools, the students tend to resegregate themselves in social interactions and friendship choices.

The relative physical isolation of ethnic groups in the United States means that individuals in these groups are much more likely to engage in qualitative interactions with people who are like themselves than with people from different ethnic groups. Interactions with people who are different are transitory and perfunctory. The absence of close and significant interactions across ethnic, social, and cultural lines may reinforce stereotypes and cause individuals to be suspicious and distrustful—even fearful—of those who are different. Multicultural education is needed to help reverse these trends and attitudes by teaching youth about culturally different groups and by providing opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to learn, live, and work together.

Although laws exist to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, and creed, the society of the United States continues to be plagued by attitudes and behaviors that are derogatory to some ethnic, cultural, and social groups, and preferential to others. Thus, unofficial inequality flourishes, manifesting itself in racism, ethnocentrism, prejudices, favoritism, discrimination, cultural appropriation, and cultural hegemony. One revealing sign of such inequality is the frequency with which racial hostilities are reported in headline news. Another is the absence of some ethnic groups, such as Native Americans and Latinos, in leadership positions, and their virtual invisibility in the national popular culture.

Many people in the United States still believe that there is a single acceptable way to live, look, and behave as an American and a human being. The standards for determining what is appropriate derive from the Eurocentric mainstream culture. Anyone who deviates from these standards is considered to be un-American; they become objects of scorn and are subjected to discrimination, being denied equal access to institutional opportunities, political rights, economic rewards, and respect for their human dignity. Multicultural education is a potential means for correcting these distortions and inequities.

The recent revival of racial hate groups such as the skinheads and neo-Nazis; acts of racial hostility such as

racial slurs directed toward African-Americans, Korean-Americans, and Mexican-Americans; cross burnings in African-American neighborhoods; attacks by groups of ethnic youths against other ethnic groups; and recent cases of blatant police brutality against African-Americans in Los Angeles and Detroit are symptoms of the inherent social racism that prevails in United States society, where citizens have not learned to understand, respect, and value diversity. Another indication of this social deficiency is the persistence of stereotypic attitudes toward ethnic groups. In a recent study of ethnic images, Smith (1990) reports that negative perceptions of groups of color—especially African-Americans and Hispanics—are common in contemporary society. These groups are still considered to be less hard-working, more violent, less intelligent, and more unpatriotic than Anglos.

Research being conducted by Margaret Beale Spencer (1984, 1985, 1988) indicates that even though African-American children between 3 and 11 years old obtain high scores on personal self-concept measures, society still shows a preference for whites and a tendency to attribute positive traits to whites, while assigning negative traits to blacks. Thus, even young students seem to have a double consciousness, because they are able to separate their personal identities and self-esteem from knowledge about racial groups in society. They can simultaneously feel good about themselves and have negative attitudes toward their racial and ethnic groups.

Discrimination and racism are evident in the patterns of unemployment, imprisonment, poor health care, and educational failures, in which the numbers of individuals of color are disproportionately high. These attitudes and behaviors directly contradict the American democratic ideals of freedom, equality, and justice for everyone. They also belie the claim that significant progress is being made in correcting social inequalities. Multicultural education programs that help youths learn to value and celebrate diversity and engage in social action to institutionalize these values have the potential to help society live up to both the letter and spirit of its democratic ideals.

The widely held assumption held in the United States that American society should be a homogenized melting pot has destructive results. This assumption works to demean some segments of society and deny acceptance of diversity. Pluralism is a vital functional force in society, even though it is not supported and embraced in institutional policies and practices (e.g., in housing authorities, school districts, and city government) and in the habits of communities. Many culturally different individuals and groups have stopped trying to deny their ethnicity for the sake of being accepted unconditionally into mainstream society. They now insist that there is no inherent contradiction between allegiance to their own ethnic and cultural heritages and being an American. Instead, these dual identities are complementary and should be respected and promoted.

One of the most distinctive and salient traits of the United States is the way in which its incredible diversity has been fashioned into a unique culture that is a mosaic or synergy of elements from many cultures. Ethnic and cultural pluralism is an ever-present influence in all aspects of American history, life, and culture. No significant event in the historical and contemporary development of the country has occurred without some kind of ethnic influence and contribution. This vitalizing presence is evident in science and technology, economics and politics, art and literature, business and industry, entertainment and recreation, and popular culture. If one of the primary functions of schooling is to transmit the socio-cultural legacy of the nation to its young citizens, then our educational system must incorporate multiculturalism as a persistent and routine component of programs and practices.

The increasing ethnic diversity of the United States population makes multicultural education for all students an imperative, particularly if education is to fulfill its basic functions by being personally meaningful, socially relevant, culturally accurate, and pedagogically sound. Demographic analyses of the population distribution of U.S. citizens indicate that Hispanics and African-Americans account for the highest percentage of population growth.

The total population of students of color grew between 1980 and 1988 to almost 30 percent, compared to 24 percent in the 1970s (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). As with the general population, these trends are expected to continue well into the next century. The diversity of the student population is further increased by the high rate of African-American and Hispanic youths living in poverty (45.1% and 39.3% in 1987) and the growing number of immigrant students from Latin American and Asian countries whose first languages are not English and whose home cultures are not based on a Eurocentric or Western model.

The net result of these demographic changes is that the United States is becoming a more pluralistic society than it has ever been. Diversity in education, based on ethnicity, social class, language, non-Western national origins, economic status, cultures, and interests, is no longer a luxury or a matter of choice—it is a necessity for the survival of society. Unfortunately, while educational policies, programs, and practices that systematically ignore these demographic realities are unethical, immoral, and reprehensible, they are not technically illegal. If the principles of access and availability that are embedded in desegregation laws were extended to educational programs, then failure to make the substance of curriculum and instruction culturally pluralistic would be illegal.

As different ethnic, racial, social, and cultural groups grow in size and political significance, they will demand that

social policies and programs be responsive to their particular needs and interests. Satisfying these demands will require more cultural sensitivity, "rainbow" coalitions, and pluralistically negotiated compromises. Ethnic and special interest group tensions may accelerate as a result of competition for limited resources such as jobs, housing, and political power; definitions and visions of what it means to be American will change; and there will be greater differences of opinion about the sources of the nation's present success, future potential, and most desirable images and symbols (Henry, 1990). None of these issues will be resolved without some fundamental knowledge of, sensitivity to, and respect for culturally and ethnically diverse experiences, perspectives, and peoples, and without some power sharing among these groups. Multicultural education can develop skills to meet these needs. Therefore, the well-being of U.S. society and education for and about cultural pluralism are inextricably linked.

Another feature of American society that underscores the importance of multicultural education is its growing involvement in global affairs, increased global interdependence, and the shifting international balance of power. Some recent examples of international developments that have direct ramifications for the continuous leadership of the United States in global affairs are the challenge to U.S. dominance of the world's marketplace by Japan, Germany, and Korea; military crises in the Middle East that affect the oil supply and reserves; the U.S. fiscal resource allocations between military and social services expenditures; governmental instability in South and Central America, which places incredible demands on U.S. military support and foreign loan capacity; famine and droughts in Africa and Asia that require U.S. support in health care and food supplies; increasing birth rates and epidemic illnesses; human rights issues around the globe; and growing foreign investments in the United States.

These developments mean that U.S. citizens must interact in different ways and under different circumstances with unfamiliar peoples at home and abroad. Successful interactions and relationships require the use of knowledge, attitudes, and skills about cultural diversity within a global context. For example, the success of U.S. international diplomacy is becoming increasingly dependent upon knowledge and principles of cultural pluralism. Multicultural education can create a foundation for effective and successful diplomacy in the global context (Bennett, 1990).

Culture and Human Development

Culture shapes human behavior, attitudes, and values. Human behavior results from a process of socialization, and socialization always takes place within the context of specific cultural and ethnic environments (Kallen, 1970; Novak, 1975; Pai, 1984). As Kimball

(1987) states, the basic caretaking practices of human survival are essentially the same for everyone, but their pattern, organization, and learning are specific. Hence, humans are social beings who carry within them their individual biological and psychological traits as well as the legacies of their ethnic group's historical background, collective heritage, and cultural experiences.

When educators claim that their top priority is to treat all children like human beings, regardless of ethnic identity, cultural background, or economic status, they are creating a paradox. A person's humanity cannot be isolated or divorced from his or her culture or ethnicity. One cannot be human without culture and ethnicity, and one cannot have culture and ethnicity without being human. As Lisa Delpit states, "If one does not see color, one does not really see children" (Delpit, 1992). Therefore, to acknowledge and respect one another—to be fully human—requires mutual understanding and appreciation based on cultural understanding (Gay, 1991; Spindler, 1987).

The influences of culture and ethnicity are established early and thoroughly in the process of human growth and development, and they prevail thereafter for the remainder of one's life. Some secondary elements of culture can be modified over time and with experience, but the core features continue to be the mainstay of a person's sense of being and identity throughout life. Kallen (1970, pp. 184-185) makes this point cogently in the following observations:

> Deeply ingrained cultural socialization becomes problematic in education when the schooling process operates on one cultural model to the exclusion of all others, or when culturally different children are expected to set aside all their cultural habits as a condition for succeeding in school. Such a demand is not only unreasonable, but is impossible to achieve. Attempts to comply with it may lead to cultural adaptation, marginality, alienation, and isolation. With the exception of adaptation, none of these responses is conducive to maximizing the human well-being and academic success of students. The incompatibilities or discontinuities between the culture of the school and those of different ethnic groups need to be major issues of analysis in making decisions about educational programs and practices that reflect and promote cultural diversity (Spindler, 1987b). These incompatibilities or discontinuities are especially important to any understanding of the aspects of human behavior that most directly affect teaching and learning, such as values orientation, interpersonal relations, communication styles, time usage, performance styles, procedural rules, and systems of problem solving and cognitive processing (Boggs, Watson-Gegeo, & McMillen, 1985; Kochman, 1981; Shade, 1981, 1989).

Many of the significant discontinuities that exist between mainstream culture—

as displayed in school procedures—and the cultures of various ethnic groups operate on a subconscious level and without deliberate intention. The discontinuities occur when people behave naturally, because their behavior is strongly influenced by cultural conditioning. Responsible education decision-making in a pluralistic society cannot result if educational leaders continue to function without being conscious of how culture shapes their own and their students' attitudes, values, and behaviors. By becoming more aware that they are products of their cultures and live within given value and symbol systems and by reflecting on this condition, educators can free themselves from the tyranny of their own cultures and free children from the damaging effects of premature, inaccurate, and prejudiced interpretations of their culturally induced behavior (Spindler, 1987a).

Teaching and Learning

One premise of multicultural education is that teaching and learning are cultural processes that take place in a social context. To make teaching and learning more accessible and equitable for a wide variety of students, students' cultures need to be more clearly understood. Such an understanding can be achieved by analyzing education from multiple cultural perspectives and thereby removing the blindness imposed on education by the dominant cultural experience (Spindler, 1987b).

Schools are microcosms of mainstream society (LaBelle, 1976). In their procedural norms, codes of behavior, structural arrangements, and distribution of power, privilege, and responsibility, they mirror Anglocentric cultural values. Just as classroom teachers, school administrators, and policymakers carry their cultural experiences and perspectives into their educational decisions and actions, students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds do likewise in their learning attitudes and behaviors. The inevitable result when these different systems encounter each other in pluralistic classrooms is cultural conflict that, when not deliberately mediated, can jeopardize the effectiveness of the instructional process. Educational activities and processes that are not scrutinized for their cultural content and implications can inadvertently give preferential treatment to students whose cultural backgrounds are most like school cultural norms:

> The way . . . in which the teacher responds to student behavior, the often subtle distinctions made between the sexes, the nature of the classroom control mechanisms, the topics and issues chosen for classroom study, the schedule of activities in terms of the amount of time devoted to particular aspects of the school day, the spatial organization of the classroom, and the rewards and punishments meted out are . . . culturally loaded and . . . transmit messages [that] reinforce certain student behaviors and discourage others. (La Belle, 1976, p. 73)

School leaders often operate on the faulty assumption that their values, beliefs, and actions are the norm for everyone, exist beyond any cultural constraints, or are culturally neutral. They assume that their notions of what is desirable knowledge and how it can best be taught and learned are governed entirely by general principles of good pedagogy, which has nothing to do with any specific culture. This belief is far from the truth. Culture influences and shapes all dimensions of the learning and teaching processes employed in schools.

Schools are expected to serve the human needs of cultural socialization, transmission, and self-perpetuation, and teach academic skills. Every action that they take is, unavoidably, culture-bound. Effective understanding of the educational process in a pluralistic society such as the United States requires that teaching and learning be viewed as aspects of various cultural milieux . (Kimball, 1978).

Because ethnic and cultural diversity in U.S. society is not sufficiently reflected in educational decisions and practices, schools frequently become discontinuous or out of sync with the populations that they are supposed to serve. This discontinuity exists most often when schools are controlled by individuals from the dominant culture who use only their standards to guide actions, but the population that they serve does not practice similar cultural standards (La Belle, 1976). The resulting disjunctures cause students and teachers to misinterpret one another's attitudes and actions. These cultural incompatibilities are often mistaken for intellectual inabilities, and pedagogical decisions are made accordingly. Failing to understand the cultural style of some African-Americans, for example, may cause teachers erroneously to conclude that these students have limited critical thinking and reasoning abilities. The reluctance of American Indian children to operate on a tightly controlled time schedule and engage in highly individualistic and competitive activities may be misinterpreted as lack of initiative, motivation, and responsibility. Consequently, educators often engage in "miseducating practices" because of their failure to understand the cultural characteristics of their ethnically, racially, socially, and linguistically diverse students.

General theories of learning and principles of developmental psychology that educators frequently use as the bases for making instructional decisions must be operationalized in the context of culturally pluralistic school situations and student populations. Of particular significance are the field psychology principles of contiguity, similarity, and continuity; the basic idea of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which holds that some psychological needs must be satisfied before others can be addressed; Erikson's principles of identity development; the notion that for educational experiences to be relevant they must be perceived as

personally meaningful to students; the detrimental effects that stress and anxiety can have on academic efforts and achievement; and the extent to which school learning follows procedural rules and guidelines that are compatible with those that students are accustomed to in their cultural communities. Embedded in these principles is recognition of the fact that the process of learning involves more than intellectual ability and mastery of cognitive content. It also includes the psycho-emotional disposition of the students and teachers, and the environmental settings or climates in which teaching and learning take place.

If students feel that the school environment is alien and hostile toward them or does not affirm and value who they are (as many students of color believe), they will not be able to concentrate as thoroughly as they might on academic tasks. The stress and anxiety that accompany this lack of support and affirmation cause their mental attention, energy, and efforts to be diffused between protecting their psyches from attack and attending to academic tasks. Thus, stress "adversely affects students' daily academic performances by reducing their willingness to persist at academic tasks and interfering with the cognitive processes involved in learning" (Gougis, 1986, p. 147). Furthermore, learning is a high-risk-taking enterprise that works better when students are made to feel secure and centered in who they are and what they are already capable of doing before they are asked to take on new ventures. Psychological security and a positive feeling of self-worth are prerequisites for the more abstract need to know and learn. These are some of the ideas and agruments that undergird the theory of Afrocentricity and the efforts by some school districts such as Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore, and Seattle to create Afrocentric schools (Asante, 1991/92; Hilliard, 1991/92).

For educational experiences to be relevant to culturally different students, they must reflect and connect with the students' particular life experiences and perspectives. This need reflects the fact that learning is more effective when new ideas are related to prior knowledge and initially are taught in ways familiar to students (e.g., the principles of continuity and similarity) (Boggs, Watson-Gregeo, & McMillen, 1985; Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985; Neisser, 1986). It evokes two other beliefs common to U.S. education philosophy: "start teaching where students are" and "expand the social, cultural, and intellectual horizons of students." These beliefs and principles require that cultural diversity be a driving force in all educational decision-making, from determining students' readiness for learning to designing curricula, selecting instructional materials, appraising performance, and developing appropriate programs and teaching techniques for culturally different students. The reason, simply stated, is that students learn in different ways and under different conditions, many of which are governed by their cultural socialization.

Some of the most salient specific ideas embedded in the three general categories of assumptions about the nature of society in the United States and the relationships between culture, humanity, teaching, and learning discussed above can be summarized as follows:

- Multicultural education is a basic for all students in a culturally, ethnically, and socially pluralistic society such as the United States.
- Ethnicity and culture are influential variables in shaping individual identity and behavior.
- The effects of cultural socialization are ingrained early and deeply in the human personality and persist thereafter.
- Cultural diversity is a normative description of U.S. society.
- Multicultural education is compatible with U.S. democratic ideals and is complementary to quality education.
- Because most people in the U.S. live in ethnic and cultural enclaves, they have only tangential interactions with and superficial knowledge of people who are culturally different from themselves.
- Ethnicity, culture, and human-ness are inextricably linked and interrelated.
- No one model for being American or human is equally applicable to everyone.
- Culture shapes human behavior, values, and beliefs
- Culture and ethnicity have both intrinsic worth and instrumental value for creating an effective and representative system of education that mirrors social realities in the United States and the world.
- The increasing diversification of U.S. society and persistent racial tensions heighten the need for multicultural education in all schools.
- Education decisions made without due consideration of cultural pluralism cannot serve the needs of the greatest number of students in the best possible way.
- Application of and knowledge about cultural pluralism improve the quest for educational access, equity, and excellence for all students.
- Incompatibilities in cultural structures, procedural rules, value orientations, referent points, and performance styles may cause school failure more than intellectual ability for some culturally different students. Thus, maximizing school success requires social competence, academic capability, and cultural congruity.

Major Goals of Multicultural Education

The expected outcomes of multicultural education are embedded in its defi-

nitions, justification, and assumptions, and they exhibit some clearly discernible patterns. While specific goals and related objectives are quite numerous—and vary according to contextual factors such as school settings, audiences, timing, purposes, and perspectives—they fall into seven general clusters. They cover all three domains of learning (cognitive, affective, and action) and incorporate both the intrinsic (ends) and instrumental (means) values of multicultural education. These goal clusters are ethnic and cultural literacy, personal development, attitude and values clarification, multicultural social competence, basic skills proficiency, educational equity and excellence, and empowerment for societal reform. Each one is discussed briefly below.

Developing Ethnic and Cultural Literacy

One of the primary and persistent reasons for the movement to include cultural pluralism in school programs is to correct what advocates call "sins of omission and commission." First, we must provide students with information about the history and contributions of ethnic groups who traditionally have been excluded from instructional materials and curricula; and second, we must replace the distorted and biased images of those groups that were included in the curricula with more accurate and significant information. These goals continue to be major concerns of multicultural education, because many students still know too little about the history, heritage, culture, and contributions of groups of color in the United States. Groups that are highly visible in the popular culture, such as African-Americans and Mexican Americans, are somewhat more familiar to students than others that are smaller in number and less accessible in the public press, such as Asian Americans and Native Americans. The information about and images of ethnic group members and experiences portrayed in popular culture and mass media are often inaccurate, distorted, superficial, one-dimensional, and incomplete. The prominence of African-Americans in the music and professional athletics industries and their disproportionate representation in penal institutions may lead some students to conclude that the only contributions to U.S. society by these groups has been in these highly visible areas. Similarly, if students are exposed only to racist portrayals of Native Americans, which cast them as noble savages caught forever in a historical time warp, wearing skimpy clothes, feathers, and war paint, living in teepees, and riding horses bareback, they have no idea of how to place Indians accurately in contemporary times, productively engaged in the wide variety of activities that characterize human life.

The persistence of these types of caricatures about ethnic groups, coupled with restricted inter-ethnic group interaction, reinforces the need for students to learn accurate information about ethnic groups' contributions to the history, life, and culture of the United States. Thus,

a major goal of multicultural education is to learn about the historical backgrounds, languages, cultural characteristics, contributions, critical events, significant individuals, and social, political, and economic conditions of various majority and minority ethnic groups, such as African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Eastern Europeans. This information should be comprehensive, analytical, and comparative, and should include similarities and differences within and among groups.

This goal is appropriate for both majority students and for those who are members of various ethnic minority groups. A mistake frequently made by educators is to assume either that members of ethnic minority groups already know their culture and history or that this kind of knowledge is relevant only to them. Multicultural education argues to the contrary. Membership in an ethnic group does not guarantee self-knowledge or exclusive ownership of knowledge about that group. Acquiring knowledge about the history, life, and culture of ethnic groups is appropriate for all students because they need to learn more, with greater accuracy, about their own cultural heritages and those of others. Furthermore, knowledge about ethnic pluralism is a necessary foundation for respecting, appreciating, valuing, and celebrating diversity, both nationally and internationally.

Personal Development

The psychological underpinnings of multicultural education explain its emphasis on developing greater self-understanding, positive self-concepts, and pride in one's ethnic identity. Emphasizing these areas is part of multicultural education's goal of contributing to the personal development of students, which contends that a better sense of self contributes to the overall intellectual, academic, and social achievement of students. Students who feel good about themselves are likely to be more open and receptive to interaction with others and to respect their cultures and identities. This argument is further justified by claims made about the reciprocal relationship between self-concept, academic achievement, ethnicity, culture, and individual identity.

Many students have internalized the negative and distorted conceptions of their own and other ethnic groups, a process that has been promoted in larger society. Students from groups of color may be convinced that their heritages have little of value to offer, while those from dominant groups may have inflated notions about their significance. Developing a better understanding of their own and other ethic groups and cultural experiences can correct these distortions. Multicultural education also helps educators to fulfill the goals of maximizing human potential, meeting individual needs, and teaching the whole child by enhancing feelings of personal worth, confidence, and competence. It creates

a psycho-social state of readiness in individuals and learning environments, which has a positive effect upon academic efforts and task mastery.

Attitudes and Value Clarification

Strong ethnic prejudice and ethnocentric values persist in U.S. society, based upon and driven by beliefs that have no basis in fact, but are commonly evoked. Several examples illustrate this point. The high unemployment rates among African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and American Indians lead some people to believe that these groups are lazy and have no work ethic. The control of most major institutions and power positions by European Americans cause some people to think that these positions were acquired because European Americans have innate intellectual superiority and are destined to be leaders. The prominence of recent immigrants and racial group members in low-level service jobs cause some people to conclude that their economic status is synonymous with their human worth, and to act accordingly. Asian Americans are thought to be highly intelligent because Japanese and Chinese Americans often perform well on selected measures of intellectual ability.

The tendency to ascribe attributes and behaviors of individuals to the entire ethnic group to which they belong is the basis for perpetuating stereotypes, prejudices, and racism. This tendency, along with the disparities in distribution of opportunities and rewards in American society, supports multicultural education's goal of clarifying ethnic attitudes and values. It includes confronting prejudices, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, and racism directly; critical analysis of the sources, expressions, and effects of negative ethnic attitudes and values; reconciling differences between ethnic beliefs and truth, supported by documented facts; and developing new, more positive, and enriched ethnic attitudes, beliefs, and values to replace the old, negative ones.

Multicultural education also promotes the core values that stem from the principles of human dignity, justice, equality, freedom, self-determination, and democracy. The intent is to teach youths to respect and embrace ethnic pluralism, to realize that cultural differences are not synonymous with deficiencies or inferiorities, and to recognize that diversity is an integral part of the human condition and U.S. life. Clarifying ethnic attitudes and values is designed to help students understand that some conflict of values is unavoidable in ethnically and racially pluralistic societies; that conflict does not have to be corrosive and divisive—when managed well it can be a catalyst for social progress; that there is strength in ethnic and cultural pluralism; that ethnic allegiance and national loyalty are not irreconcilable; and that cooperation and coalition among ethnic groups are not dependent upon having identical beliefs, values, and behaviors (NCSS, 1992). Analyzing and clarifying ethnic

attitudes and values are key steps in the process of unleashing the creative potential of individuals for self-renewal and of society for continuous growth and development.

Multicultural Social Competence

It is imperative that students learn how to interact with and understand people who are ethnically, racially, and culturally different from themselves. The United States and the world are becoming increasingly more diverse, compact, and interdependent. Yet, for most students, the formative years of their lives are spent in ethnically and culturally isolated or encapsulated enclaves. This existence does not adequately prepare them to function effectively in ethnically different environments and multicultural settings. Attempts at cross-cultural interactions are often stymied by negative attitudes, values, and expectations; cultural blunders; and by trying to impose rules of social etiquette from one cultural system onto another. The results are often heightened interracial and interethnic group frustrations, anxiety, fears, failures, and hostilities.

Multicultural education can ease these tensions by teaching skills in cross-cultural communication, interpersonal relations, perspective taking, contextual analysis, understanding alternative points of view and frames of reference, and analyzing how cultural conditions affect values, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, expectations, and behaviors. It also can help students learn how to understand cultural differences without making hasty and arbitrary value judgments about their intrinsic worth. Attaining these goals can be expedited by providing wide varieties of opportunities for students to practice their cultural competence and to interact with different ethnic peoples, experiences, and situations.

Basic Skill Proficiency

A major goal of multicultural education is to facilitate the teaching and learning of basic literacy skills of ethnically different students. Its importance evolves from the persistence and magnitude of school failure of Hispanics, African-Americans, and American Indians; the relationships among relevance of instructional materials, academic efforts, and achievement; and the fact that multicultural educationincludes content and process, ideology and methodology. It builds on the premise that some of this failure is due to methodological or pedagogical inadequacies of schools and teaching instead of the intellectual abilities of students of color.

Multicultural education can improve mastery of reading, writing, and mathematical skills; subject matter content; and intellectual process skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution by providing content and techniques that are more meaningful to the lives and frames of reference of ethnically different students. Using

ethnic materials, experiences, and examples as the contexts for teaching, practicing, and demonstrating mastery of academic and subject matter skills increases the appeal of the tools of instruction, heightens the practical relevance of the skills to be learned, and improves students' time on task. This combination of conditions leads to greater focused efforts, task persistence, skill mastery, and academic achievement (Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985; Garcia, 1982; Boggs, Watson-Gregeo, & McMillen, 1985).

Another aspect of multicultural education that contributes directly to the attainment of higher levels of basic skills achievement is matching teaching and learning styles. Disjunctures in how different students learn in their cultural communities and how they are expected to learn in school cause much time and attention to be devoted to resolving these conflicts instead of concentrating on academic tasks. Teaching students . . as they are accustomed to learning minimizes these conflicts and channels more energy and effort directly into the academic tasks to be accomplished (Boggs, Watson-Gregeo, & McMillen, 1985; Spindler, 1987; Neisser, 1986). Thus, culturally contextualized teaching for making the educational process more effective for ethnically diverse students is a fundamental principle of multicultural education.

The kinds of social climates that exist in classrooms also affect students' performances on academic tasks. This influence is particularly true for ethnic groups that consider social relationships and informal settings imperative to the learning process. When teachers respond to these needs by including ethnic symbols, images, and information in the classroom decorations, curriculum content, and interpersonal interactions, ethnic students feel validated, at ease, and have greater affiliation with the school. These feelings of personal affirmation and comfort create the backdrop of personal connectedness that is essential to students' taking ownership in learning, which, in turn, leads to more sustained attention, effort, time on task, and improved task mastery and academic achievement.

Educational Equity and Excellence

This goal of multicultural equity is closely related to the goal of basic skill mastery, but is much broader and more philosophical. It derives from the notion that educational excellence is unattainable for any student when certain groups are denied a fair chance to receive the highest quality education possible and when some contributions are systematically excluded from the U.S. and human stories. It builds upon the idea that comparability instead of sameness is the key to providing equitable educational opportunities for ethnically different students (Gay, 1988).

In order to determine what constitutes comparability of learning opportunities,

educators must thoroughly understand how culture shapes learning styles, teaching behaviors, and educational decisions. They must then develop a variety of means to accomplish common learning outcomes that reflect the preferences and styles of a wide variety of groups and individuals. By giving all students more choices about how they will learn—choices that are compatible with their cultural styles—none will be unduly advantaged or disadvantaged at the procedural levels of learning. These choices will lead to closer parallelism (e.g., equity) in opportunities to learn and more comparability in students' achieving the maximum of their own intellectual capabilities (e.g., excellence). Other aspects of this goal include teaching accurate information about all segments of U.S. society; developing a sense of social consciousness, moral courage, and commitment to equality; and acquiring skills in political activism for reforming society to make it more humane, sympathetic toward cultural pluralism, morally just, and egalitarian. Therefore, the multicultural goal of achieving educational equity and excellence encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills, as well as the principles of democracy (Banks, 1990, 1991, 1992).

Personal Empowerment for Social Reform

The ultimate goal of multicultural education is to begin a process of change in schools that will ultimately extend to society. This goal will be accomplished by cultivating in students attitudes, values, habits, and skills so that they can become social change agents who are committed to reforming society in order to eradicate ethnic and racial disparities in opportunities and are willing to act upon this commitment. To do so, they need to improve their knowledge of ethnic issues as well as develop decision-making abilities, social action skills, leadership capabilities, a sense of political efficacy, and a moral commitment to human dignity and equality (Banks, 1991b; NCSS, 1992). That is, they not only need to understand and appreciate why ethnicity and cultural pluralism are salient features of human life and U.S. society, but also how to translate this knowledge into decisions and actions related to key socio-political issues, events, concerns, and situations.

This goal and related skill development are designed to make society more genuinely egalitarian and more accepting of cultural pluralism. They also are intended to ensure that ethnic and cultural groups that traditionally have been victimized and excluded will become full-fledged participants at all levels of society, with all of the attendant rights, privileges, and responsibilities. Multicultural education contributes directly to developing skills for democratic citizenship in the United States and the global village. This function of multiculturalism is what Banks (1990, 1991/92, 1993a) meant by his proposal to use a

social action approach to multicultural education, which teaches students how to become social critics, political activists, change agents, and competent leaders in a culturally pluralistic and ethnically diverse society and world. It is also similar to Sleeter and Grant's (1988) conception of multicultural education for social reconstruction. This approach focuses on oppression and social structure inequalities, with the intention of creating a society that better empowers and serves the needs and interests of all groups of people. It builds personal empowerment in students by establishing relevance between school learning and social living, providing practice in applying knowledge and taking action to direct their own lives, and demonstrating the power of knowledge, collaborative efforts, and political action in effecting social change.

Approaches to Multicultural Education

Advocates of multicultural education offer many different suggestions for how it can be accomplished in school practice. Christine Bennett, James Banks, Ricardo Garcia, Sonia Nieto, Geneva Gay, Christine Sleeter, Carl Grant, and Margaret Gibson are among the leaders in the field who have developed models for implementing multicultural education. These models tend to be developmental and cumulative, as well as somewhat historical in nature. They start with the simplest techniques and proceed to more complex ones. They also tend to indicate how current efforts to implement multicultural education have evolved from those that appeared when the movement began in the late 1960s. For example, Banks (1993a) identifies four approaches to multicultural education, each increasingly more significant and comprehensive: (1) teaching about contributions of culturally different groups and individuals; (2) an additive approach in which multicultural lessons and units of study are supplements or appendages to existing curricula; (3) a transformation approach in which the basic nature of curriculum and instruction are changed to reflect the perspective and experiences of diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and social groups; and (4) a decision-making and social action approach that teaches students how to clarify their ethnic and cultural values, and to engage in socio political action for greater equality, freedom, and justice for everyone.

Sleeter and Grant (1988; Grant & Sleeter, 1993) reviewed the published literature on multicultural education to determine how the field was being conceptualized. Their analysis generated four common approaches: (1) teaching culturally different students to fit into mainstream society; (2) a human relations approach that emphasizes diverse peoples living together harmoniously; (3) the single group studies approach, which concentrates on developing awareness, respect, and acceptance of one group at a time; (4) focusing on prejudice reduction, providing equal opportunities and social justice for all

groups, and the effects of inequitable power distribution on ethnic or cultural groups. To this list they added a fifth: education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist and teaches students to become analytical and critical thinkers and social reformers who are committed to redistribution of power and other resources among diverse groups.

Since other proposed approaches to multicultural education are variations on these suggestions by Banks and Grant and Sleeter, there is no need to elaborate upon them here. However, three general approaches can be extrapolated from these more specific approaches: (1) teaching content about cultural pluralism, (2) teaching culturally different students, and (3) using cultural pluralism to teach other academic subjects and intellectual skills. Teaching about cultural pluralism is the most traditional and common approach. It is primarily content-centered, with an emphasis on developing units of instruction (lessons, modules, courses) about the history, heritage, contributions, and social issues of ethnic groups. These units may be designed to be included in any school subject, but most often appear in social studies, language arts, and fine arts. Another manifestation of this approach is analyzing textbooks and other instructional materials for their treatment of people of color and revising them when necessary to increase their accuracy and overall representation of cultural diversity. Regardless of the particular strategy used, teaching about cultural diversity tends to concentrate on providing more factually correct information about ethnic and cultural groups that traditionally have been under-represented in U.S. society and educational programs or have been treated with prejudice and bias.

Teaching the culturally different is more process-oriented than content-oriented. Its center of attention is establishing more effective instructional relationships and rapport with students from different ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds as a basis for improving educational opportunities and outcomes. Teachers, administrators, counselors, and supervisors learn about the cultural values and experiences of different cultural groups to determine how they may affect attitudes and actions in teaching-learning situations. The new insights gained are then used to determine the kinds of changes that are needed in the educational process to make learning opportunities for ethnically different students more comparable in kind and quality to their middle-class, Anglo counterparts.

The underlying premise of this approach to multicultural education is that an interactive relationship exists between culture and cognition, education and ethnicity, and teaching-learning styles and cultural conditioning. The extent to which these concepts are made explicit in educational decision-making has a significant impact on culturally different students' access to equal status knowledge. Whereas teaching about

cultural pluralism emphasizes materials development and curriculum design, teaching the culturally different gives priority to teacher education, staff development, and classroom instruction. The idea behind it is that if the attitudes, values, and knowledge teachers have about culturally different students are improved, then the decisions they make and actions they take in planning and implementing programs will reflect these changes. That is, teachers will be able to provide more culturally relevant instruction for students from different ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds.

The third approach to multicultural education combines content and process, and is often referred to as infusion. In practice, it means using culturally pluralistic content, experiences, and perspectives in teaching other knowledge and skills. Ethnic and cultural materials provide the contexts for students to practice and demonstrate mastery of more general academic and subject matter skills. For example, ethnic novels, poetry, stories, and folklore are used in the process of teaching various reading skills, such as comprehension, vocabulary, and inferring meaning. Patterns of ethnic migration and settlement might be used to teach geographic directions and locations. Ethnic and gender employment trends could be used for students to practice and demonstrate such mathematical skills as ratio, percentages, proportions, and probabilities. Critical thinking, problem solving, and values analysis skills might be developed as students examine issues, events, and situations particularly germane to the historical and contemporary experiences of different groups of color and social class in the United States, such as their images and portrayals in mass media, affirmative action, economic exploitation, and political oppression. Additionally, the knowledge that teachers and other school leaders acquire about how cultural conditioning affects behavior in learning situations is employed in making decisions about what instructional strategies, performance appraisal, curricular materials, needs assessment, and learning climates are most appropriate to maximize the educational opportunities of culturally different students.

Using cultural pluralism in all teaching and learning activities as a way to implement multicultural education is based on four major premises: (1) using diversified means to achieve common learning outcomes is the best way to give culturally different students an equal chance at comparable quality educational opportunities; (2) cultural diversity is a characteristic trait of American society, and since a major function of schooling is socialization into the national culture, ethnic and cultural pluralism should be a core element of the educational process; (3) it is more pedagogically sound for the study of cultural pluralism to permeate all dimensions of the educational process, rather than being taught as a separate and isolated entity; and (4) effective multicultural education requires comprehensive efforts that integrate attitudes,

values, content, and actions and involve all aspects of the education system simultaneously.

Key Principles of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is based on some commonly asserted principles. The frequency and consistency with which these principles are declared across time and advocates are other strong indications of the consensus that exists about some essential, baseline features of multicultural education and a convincing counter-argument to claims that the field lacks conceptual clarity.

A principle is a basic or essential quality that determines the intrinsic nature of something. Multicultural education includes several characteristics or traits that, as a composite, distinguish its inherent nature and quality from other educational innovations. Parekh (1986) sets the overall tone of multicultural education in his judgment that multicultural education is good education for all children. To endorse multicultural education is not to imply that the entire education system should be destroyed or that the Anglocentric cultural dominance existing in schooling should merely be replaced with the dominance of other ethnic cultures; neither is it to deny the need for a common national culture. Rather, it simply says that the education system needs to be improved by becoming less culturally monolithic, rigid, biased, hegemonic, and ethnocentric. The prevailing norm in educational decision-making and operating procedures should be cultural pluralism and heterogeneity, instead of cultural hegemony or homogeneity. Asante (1991/92) captures this intent and orientation in his explanation that the goal is to achieve cultural pluralism without hierarchy.

The general principles of multicultural education are supported by several more specific ones. Multiculturalists describe the most salient "personality traits" of multicultural education as follows:

- A personally empowering, socially transformative, and pedagogically humanistic process
- Correcting and rehabilitating some of the mistakes that schools have made in educating culturally different children, especially those of color and poverty
- A search for scholarly honesty and truth by giving due recognition to the contributions of diverse groups and cultures to the collective accomplishments of humankind and the United States
- Fundamentally an affective and humanistic enterprise that aims to achieve greater understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and peoples
- Both content and process, structure and substance, action and reflection, knowledge and values, philosophy

and methodology—an educational means and an end

- For all students in all grades, subjects, and school settings
- A means of achieving parity in educational opportunities for diverse students
- A process of systematic and systemic change that is developmental, progressive, and ongoing
- A confluence of diverse cultural heritages, experiences, perspectives, and contributions
- Has inherent merit for its own sake, as well as instrumental value for facilitating other educational goals
- A bridge for making meaningful connections between the abstractions of schooling and the actual life experiences of ethnically and culturally different students
- A vehicle for and conduit of relevance, equity, excellence, and personal meaningfulness in education for culturally diverse students
- An acceptance and celebration of diversity as a normal fact of human life, U.S. society, and schooling
- A personification of the U.S. democratic ideal of equality as practiced in school programs that accept all peoples' contributions, cultures, issues, and experiences as worth educational content

Effects of Multicultural Education

Research findings that verify the conceptual claims about the effects of multicultural education are rather sparse. This relative lack of research is due largely to the nature and relative youth of the field. During the 25 or so years of multicultural education's existence, most research and scholarship have been devoted to defining the conceptual parameters of the field, documenting cultural characteristics, and developing sample curricula and instructional strategies for classroom practice. The fact that multicultural education is a very heavily affective endeavor means that it does not lend itself easily to traditional empirical research methods and paradigms. Furthermore, since the field is still emerging, defining itself, and charting its directions, much of the scholarly activities deal with various segments or components of the field rather than the field as an entity. The empirical research that does exist deals with separate segments of the field, such as self-concepts, literacy, cooperative learning, and ethnic identity development.

Some of the most compelling verifications of the overall benefits of multicultural education are autobiographical and anecdotal stories that leaders in the field share among themselves in their interpersonal interactions. Invariably, they testify to the positive effect of the principles and experiences they accrued relative to their self-concepts, self-esteem, sense of personal confidence and competence,

social and interpersonal skills, and academic performance. These benefits, however, are not readily accessible to average audiences, since they are not included in formal disseminations such as conference presentations and scholarly publications. Consequently, research findings on the effects of multicultural education are still largely preliminary, tentative, and inconclusive. Much of it deals with identifying and describing culturally pluralistic variables such as cultural values, learning styles, communication styles, and presentation/performance styles of various ethnic groups (Kochman, 1981; Neisser, 1985; Shade, 1989; Treuba, Guthrie, & Au, 1981). These findings, summarized here, should be understood accordingly.

Reviews of research compiled by Banks (1991a, 1993b) and Gay (1991) are useful summaries for discerning the directions and trends that are emerging about the effects of multicultural education. The Banks reviews focus on modification of racial attitudes through the use of curriculum units and courses, instructional materials, reinforcements, and teaching methods. Many of these studies were conducted in the 1970s. While the results are not unequivocally conclusive, they do indicate the following:

- The racial, ethnic, and gender attitudes of students can be positively affected by curriculum and instructional interventions.
- The effects of instructional intervention on student racial, ethnic, and gender attitudes are influenced by the nature, structure, and direction of the intervention and the characteristics of the students, teachers, school environment, and local community.
- Cooperative learning leads to more positive racial attitudes for all students, more interracial friendship choices, and academic gains for students of color (especially Hispanics and African-Americans). It has no apparent effects on the academic achievement of Anglo students, since they perform about the same in cooperative and competitive learning environments. Cooperative, cross-racial learning also increases student instruction, self-esteem, and ability to empathize.
- To be most effective, cooperative learning experiences should engage members in common goals and equal status relationships and should allow individuals to get to know each other and be reinforced by institutional support.
- Teaching interventions that reinforce positive attributes of African-Americans can reduce young black children's preferences for whites. Deliberately designed instructional intervention also can reduce prejudices toward all group members.
- Multicultural materials, vicarious experiences, role playing, and simulations can help students develop more positive racial attitudes and perceptions. Two cases in point are "The Eye of the Storm" and "A Class Divided."

The research on cultural diversity and learning reviewed by Gay (1992) reveals some findings of particular aspects of multicultural education that were not included in the Banks review. One of the most compelling findings to emerge from the Gay review is the effects of modifying teaching styles to match the cultural characteristics and learning styles of different ethnic groups. One graphic illustration of these effects is the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). Several researchers have been documenting the effects of this language arts program for young native Hawaiian children. The results have been phenomenal. When the communication, interpersonal, and learning styles of native Hawaiian students were employed in the classroom, both their social and academic skills (including time on task, attention span, quality and quantity of participation, school attendance, reading ability, and language arts skills) improved significantly. Reading test scores increased from the 13th to the 67th percentile in four years.

Some other studies produce similar results with other ethnic groups, although the research is not as comprehensive and longitudinal as that of KEEP. With African-American students, the research shows that their engagement in instructional activities and academic achievement improves when (1) different and frequently varied formats are used to present learning tasks; (2) activities and physical participation are routine elements of learning; (3) features of their communication styles are incorporated into the teaching process; (4) African-American content is a part of the curriculum; and (5) the instuctional materials and activities have high interest appeal (Boykin, 1982; Hale, 1982). Several studies involving Native Americans in the United States and Canada indicate that when teachers adapt their instructional classroom interactional styles to approximate more closely those of the students, participation results are positive. Using cognitive frameworks (patterns of thought, frames of reference, styles of information processing, procedural rules, content materials) familiar to culturally different, poor, and female students has been shown to improve their reading skills, comprehension of learning tasks, and recall of factual information (Banks & Banks, 1993, Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985; Greenbaum, 1985).

While findings from empirical research on the effects of multicultural education are sparse, those that do exist are very encouraging:

- Negative racial and ethnic attitudes toward others can be changed through deliberate intervention, but the process is long-range.
- Establishing a closer fit between teaching style and culturally different learning styles has positive social and academic consequences.
- Alternative instructional means can be used to achieve common outcome expectations without compromizing

the educational standards and quality of anyone.

- Some instructional techniques are more effective than others for some members of ethnic and cultural groups.
- Instructional initiatives that work well for groups of color generally benefit Anglo students, too. However, the converse is not true. Educational interventions that are successful with Anglo students often have negative consequences for culturally different students.
- The procedures of teaching and learning are important targets of intervention for multicultural change. They are as significant as the content and substance of teaching, if not more so.
- Culturally sensitive teaching techniques that work well with diverse students appear to be effective across age, gender, school settings, and subjects.

Reform Implications

Advocates agree on some common features of multicultural education. These features provide the conceptual directions and parameters of reform initiatives for implementation of multicultural education in school practice. Effective multicultural education (1) requires total school reform; (2) is for all students in all grades and subjects; (3) involves acquiring knowledge, clarifying attitudes and values, and developing social actions and skills about ethnic and cultural pluralism; and (4) includes recognizing, accepting, and celebrating diversity as a fundamental fact and salient feature in human life, U.S. society, and world communities.

These conditions are necessary if schools are to prepare all students for the realities of living in a racially, ethnically, socially, and culturally pluralistic world, and to become change agents to transform society so that it will be more humane, egalitarian, and openly receptive to pluralism of all kinds. In content, spirit, intent, and emphasis, multicultural education is highly compatible with the democratic ideals of the United States, principles of good pedagogy, and conceptions of educational equity. It has both intrinsic and instrumental value for improving the overall quality, relevance, and effectiveness of education in the United States for all students.

The following are more specific instructional messages gleaned from this synthesis for multicultural education summarized above:

- Efforts undertaken to implement multicultural education should be developmentally appropriate for the teachers, students, subjects, and school community contexts.
- Multiple techniques are required to make multicultural education effective.
- Both the content and processes of education should be changed to reflect cultural diversity.

- Efforts for change need to be targeted for specific dimensions of the educational enterprise and guided by deliberate and intentional purposes and activities.

- Students and teachers should be allowed to engage in the process of reform at multiple levels and in various ways.

- Cooperative learning efforts that engage culturally diverse students in equal status interactions and relationships should be a common feature of reform initiatives.

- Teaching styles should be modified to incorporate sensitivity to a wider variety of learning styles.

- Diverse formats of classroom organizations and activity structures should be frequently used to allow for variability, active participation, and novelty in learning.

- A conceptual orientation to multicultural education should be selected or developed to use as a guideline for determining appropriate action strategies and as a yardstick to determine progress.

Much remains to be done before the promise and potential of multicultural education are fully realized. Its theoretical conceptualization is progressing nicely. School practice and establishing the effects of multicultural education are not nearly as advanced. Both of these steps offer numerous challenges and opportunities for committed education to make a difference. Many action and research possibilities are embedded in the theory of multicultural education. Their potential is virtually limitless on many different levels as a way to reform U.S. education; as a means of renewing and revitalizing society; as a mechanism for making democratic ideals more meaningful in a culturally pluralistic societal context; and as a tool for making education more effective for culturally different students. The question now is whether we have the courage and will to rise to the challenge and embrace the invitation to transform U.S. education so that it really does serve the needs of all children.

Geneva Gay, Ph.D., professor of education and faculty associate of the Center for Multicultural Education, at the University of Washington-Seattle is an established lecturer and prolific writer on issues in multicultural education. Dr. Gay has served as a consultant to school districts, state education agencies, colleges and universities, regional service centers, and professional organizations nationwide. Her areas of expertise include: (1) the meanings and needs for multicultural education; (2) professional development for multicultural education; (3) curriculum design and implementation strategies for multicultural education; (4) general principles, foundations, and strategies for instructional program planning; and (5) Black cultural characteristics and implications for educational policies, practices, and programs. In 1991, Dr. Gay worked to revise the Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education for the National Council for the Social Studies. She has published articles since 1970, and recent efforts include: "Effective Teaching Practices for Multicultural Classrooms," "Ethnic Minorities and Educational Equality," and "Building Cultural Bridges: A Bold Proposal for Teacher Education." In 1994, she authored, At the Essence of Learning: Multicultural Education (West Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Pi). She also received the 1994 Multicultural Educator Award, the first to be presented by the National Association of Multicultural Education.

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